

DEVOTIONAL TIME

10-30-2014 @ 0900

“And You Think You’re Bad!”

Acts 3:17-20

AS THE DEER

As the deer pants for the water, so my soul longs after You!
You alone are my heart’s desire, and I long to worship You!
You alone are my Strength, my Shield; To You alone may my spirit yield!
You alone are “My Heart’s Desire”, and I long to worship You!

Acts 3:17-20

“And now, my friends, I know that what you and your leaders did to Jesus was due to your ignorance. God announced long ago through all the prophets that His Messiah had to suffer, and He made it come true in this way. Repent, then, and turn to God, so that He will forgive your sins. If you do, times of spiritual strength will come from the Lord, and he will send Jesus, who is the Messiah He has already chosen for you!”

QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

- Have you ever “taken a side” in some debate or disagreement, even done some things, maybe some *really bad things*, that left you feeling “unforgiveable” for joining the *wrong* side?
- Have you ever been hurt so badly by vicious words or cruel deeds, you were sure you could never forgive the one(s) who wronged you so barbarically?
- Did you ever come to an “Amazing Grace” moment, one in which the Mercy of Jesus “cut you to the heart”? Were you torn between grief/guilt and gratitude/glee?

Very few burdens in life weigh heavier on our hearts than “unforgivable sin”, the guilt that awakens when we realize the enormity of our mistake, and the clawing fear we will be “found out”. We get so suspicious about certain conversations, or supposed looks by certain people, believing they are talking about us, or somehow have recognized “the truth” about us. It’s a “weight that will not weaken”, “go away”, or give us any rest. In today’s passage, Peter goes head-to-head with “the elephant in the room”. Peter confronts the people with the fearful fact they, too, have played a part in the crucifixion of an innocent man; what makes it worse is that He was *the* Son of God! Now notice the Hope: as bad as this MISTAKE is, Peter’s Message offers forgiveness and grace, not condemnation! All of us have pasts, and in our pasts, there are often beliefs we held and choices we made that now appear “unforgivable”....BUT...what could we have possibly done worse than crucifying the Son of God? Yet God declares, through His Spirit at Pentecost, this is a forgivable offense! Why, then, shall we carry any other “load of guilt”? Why do we continue to “deny the rest” that Christ came to give us through His Forgiveness and Salvation? Paul affirms elsewhere “all have sinned, and fallen short of the Glory of God”, lied, cheated, destroyed someone’s reputation, or any number of other offenses. (This means you are not the only one who feels the guilt you feel, nor are you all alone.) Peter can relate to the guilt his hearers must be feeling because Peter himself denied ever knowing Jesus in his Lord’s most trying Time. Christ had loved and cared for Peter, walked with him and talked with him, only to have Peter let Him down and turn his back on Him. After Easter, Christ sought Peter out, and forgave him! So what mistakes of ours could be worse than that? The answer: NONE! God, grant us the Grace to recognize Christ has gone “all out” to set us free, forgiving all our sins from the Cross, and restoring a clean conscience to any who repent, and go “all in” for love of Him.